



A Study On Online Shopping Dissonance Among College Girls with Reference to HEI'S

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Abstract

Online shopping has fundamentally reshaped consumer behavior, offering unparalleled convenience and access to a vast array of goods and services. However, this digital landscape frequently gives rise to cognitive dissonance, a psychological discomfort stemming from a mismatch between a customer's pre-purchase expectations and their post-purchase reality. In the context of online shopping, this "dissonance" manifests as a feeling of regret, uncertainty, or dissatisfaction after a purchase, often referred to as "buyer's remorse." It occurs when the actual product or experience doesn't align with the consumer's initial beliefs, values, or expectations. This study specifically investigates how dissonance affects women, a significant demographic in e-commerce who often prioritize aesthetic, fit, and tactile attributes. We identified key sources of dissatisfaction, including misleading product visuals, inconsistent sizing, perceived quality discrepancies, and inadequate product information. These issues, combined with the inherent limitations of the online medium and challenging post-purchase processes like returns, are major drivers of cognitive dissonance. Consumer behavior is always dynamic and changes with time, with each global revolution bringing about some changes in how people shop and how marketers adapt. The current major revolution is the emergence of universal global connectivity, which has had a significant impact on digital marketing and consumer choices. As a result, consumer behavior has changed unrecognizably over time and will continue to do so in the future. To address these challenges, we propose solutions such as leveraging advanced visual technologies, implementing sophisticated fit

prediction tools, streamlining logistics, and fostering transparent communication. By addressing these critical areas, e-commerce platforms can significantly mitigate cognitive dissonance, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction, fostering loyalty, and ensuring sustainable growth in the dynamic online retail environment.

1. Introduction

Dissonance can be the resultant of having two contradictory ideas or values. Acting in a manner that clashes with one's beliefs or values [1]. Learning new facts that contradict existing beliefs. Attitudes of choosing between two equally appealing options which require justification of the chosen path to reduce post-decision discomfort. There exists always a mismatch between what has been promised or physically rendered. This can be understood as the perceived gap between the producer and the consumer [2].

1.1. Dissatisfactory Problems and Studies a Conclusion

Women, especially young girls, represent an important demographic component to study as they mostly indulge in shopping goods for primary households, fashion & beauty, fit/aesthetics, etc [3]. The emphasis in this article is to study unique experiences and challenges of dissonance among young girls online shopping. It also delves briefly about dissatisfactory problems and studies a conclusion [4].

1.2. History of Cognitive Dissonance and Cognitive Dissonance

Cognitive dissonance is the mental discomfort that results from holding two conflicting beliefs, values, or attitudes. People tend to seek consistency in their attitudes and perceptions. This conflict causes an unpleasant feeling of unease or discomfort. Leon Festinger first proposed the theory of cognitive dissonance. It explains how people try to reach internal consistency. People have an inner need to ensure that their beliefs and behaviors are consistent. Inconsistent or conflicting beliefs can lead to disharmony [5], which people try to avoid. In his book in 1957, "A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance," Festinger explained that cognitive dissonance can be seen as an antecedent condition

that leads to activity oriented toward dissonance. Just like reduction in hunger leads to activities that is oriented towards hunger reduction. The psychological triggers must be examined to resolve the conflicts in the belief and experience. Cognitive dissonance plays a role in many value judgments, decisions, and evaluations. Becoming aware of how conflicting beliefs impact the decision-making process is a great way to improve the ability to make faster and more accurate choices [6].

2. Objectives of The Study

- To understand and study the underlying factors responsible for online shopping dissonance [7].
- To analyze the factors of dissatisfaction causing problems among student's respondents in online shopping purchases.
- To apprehend the impact of causing feelings of dissonance in terms of price, product quality, and delivery terms [8].

3. Methodology of The Study

The study is carried with structured questionnaires. Qualitative interviews were connected to explore female students' online shopping dissonance factors. Data was gathered by primary data asking the respondents questions regarding dissonance factors, such as experience of dissonance, frequency of shopping dissonance, dissonance in terms of product price, quality, and delivery time, etc. The findings shed light to explain online shopping dissonance among college girls and samples of 50 are taken into consideration to understand the factors driving them to dissonance [9].

4. The Purchase Behaviour of Females

The purchase behavior of female students, particularly their engagement with apparel and fashion industry, is notably pervasive. With the growth of electronic business, understanding female

consumer behavior in online shopping environments has become more difficult. The female segment represents a significant part of the online retail landscape, especially for fashion and apparel purchases. In India, nearly 1.34 billion people are now living, with Indian males constituting 51.5% and the female population in rural and urban areas making up 48.5% of the population. The CSO (Central Statistics Organization) and the IMRB report that the Indian economy is expanding at a faster rate and will become one of the top three economic powers as a result of a robust democracy and strategic collaboration (Muthumani, 2017). The study arises that the visakhapatnam has population of approximately 2,526,000 in 2025, with a slightly higher female population. The city has a significant youth population, with 204,610 teenagers.

5. Factors of Online Shopping Dissonance in Young Girls

Product Factors

- **Quality Concerns:** Uncertainty of product quality, material, or performance.
- **Size and Fit Issues:** Difficulty determining correct size or fit, leading to potential returns.
- **Discrepancy:** Between product descriptions and the actual product received.

Purchase Factors

- **Payment Security Concerns:** Fears about online payment security and potential fraud.
- Frustration with Lengthy or Confusing Checkout Procedures.
- **Lack of Transparency:** Unclear shipping costs, delivery times, or return policies.

Post-Purchase Factors

- **Delivery Delays:** Delays in receiving products, leading to frustration and disappointment.
- **Returns and Refunds:** Difficulty with returns, exchanges, or refunds.
- **Customer Support:** Inadequate or unresponsive customer support.

Psychological Factors

- **Regret and Guilt:** After making a purchase.
- **Social Comparison:** Comparison with others' purchases or opinions.
- **Fear of Missing Out:** Anxiety about missing deals, promotions, limited online

shopping experiences, and limited budget or financial strain.

Other Factors

- Poor website design, navigation, or user experience. Insufficient customer reviews or ratings. Mostly misleading advertisements or influencer promotions.

6. Problems Faced by Online Shopping

Online shopping, for all its convenience, inherently has features that can lead to dissatisfaction and dissonance.

6.1. Some of the Most Significant Problems are Inherent Limitations of the Online Medium

There is a lack of sensory experience, meaning shoppers can't touch, feel, or test products. This is especially problematic for items like:

- Fabrics
- Fragrances
- Furniture

The inability to engage these senses is a primary cause of quality perception issues. Some of the specific sensory barriers include:

- **Olfactory Barrier:** You cannot smell products like candles or perfumes.
- **Auditory Barrier:** You cannot hear the sound quality of products like speakers or appliances.
- **Gustatory Barrier:** You cannot taste food or beverages.

6.2. Visual Inaccuracies

Visual Inaccuracies are some of the issues that vary depending on the monitor, device setting, and colors displayed differently for each user. Product photos and 2D representations, lighting angles, and post-processing can inadvertently alter the perceived appearance. Static images can fail to convey movement, drape, or how an item truly looks when worn or used. There are certain challenges in information conveyance as well. Product descriptions that are meant to convey information are often basic and generic. The information that users need for a fully-informed purchase decision, especially for complex or high-valued items, is often absent. There is a complete lack of standardization in clothing and footwear sizes across brands. The sizes displayed do not account for the variability in body shapes. Sizes like XS, S, M, L, XL, XXL, etc. are not standardized.

7. Data Collected and Its Analysis

The collected data as shown below Figures 1 to 7:

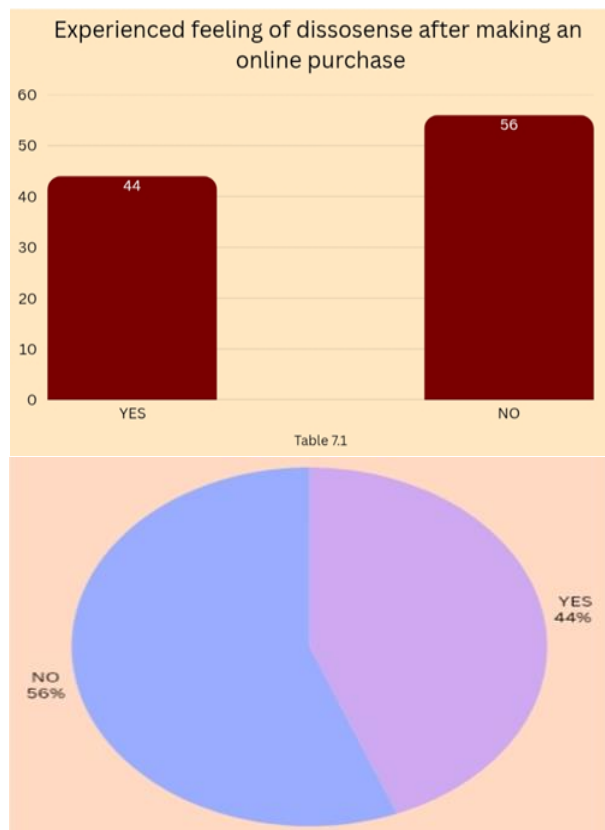


Figure 1 Analysis

In terms of experienced feelings of shopping dissonance after making online purchases, 56% of respondents have deliberated their outcome as no, while 44% of the respondents of the study has disclosed as yes. In terms of dissatisfaction after making an online purchase, this gave an insight that majority of their respondents had positive experience after having done a transaction.

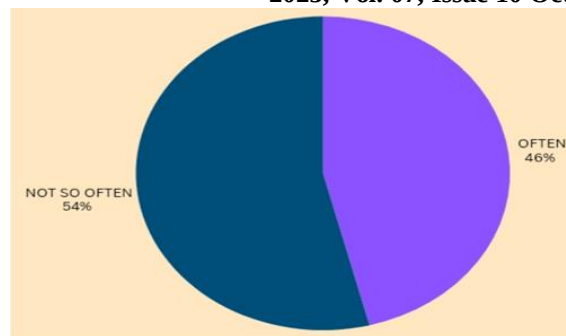
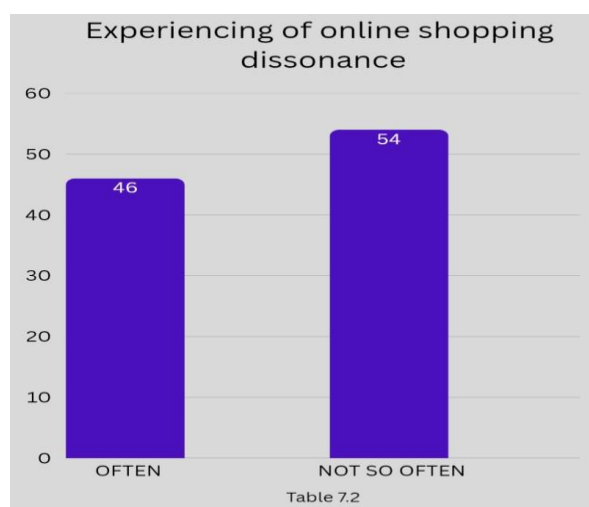


Figure 2 Analysis

The respondents were studied regarding dissonance occurring often and not so often from the studied groupings and shows significant response stating often it is taken to dissonance was estimated as 46% while those of the respondents who did not often experience online shopping dissonance amounted to 54%. So, it can be observed that the young female respondents shared eagerness to carry on online shopping.

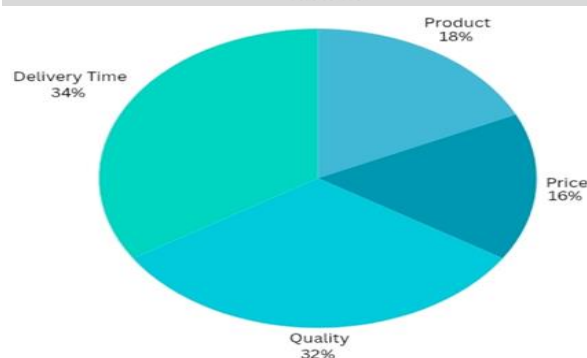
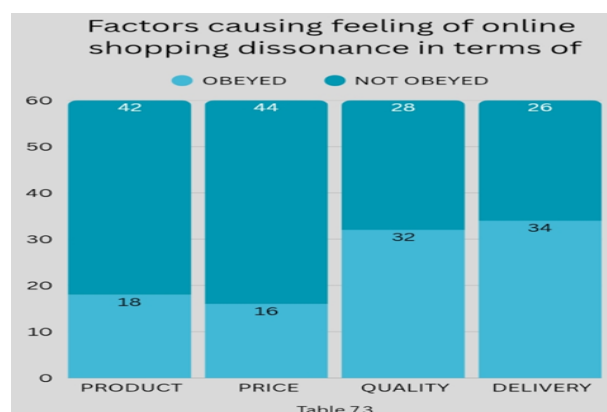


Figure 3 Analysis

The respondents have opined their feelings of online shopping dissonance in terms of attributes relating to product's price, quality, and delivery time. Among the sample respondents, 18% of them opined expressions feeling of dissatisfaction relating to as the product advertised on the apps is quite different when the product is tangibly addressed. Similarly, 16% of respondents showed

disagreement in terms of pricing as price was not relevant to the product they expected to receive. 32% expressed dissatisfaction with relevance to quality and 34% of the responses were specifying delivery time, the expected time&time elapse between receiving the product is a factor.

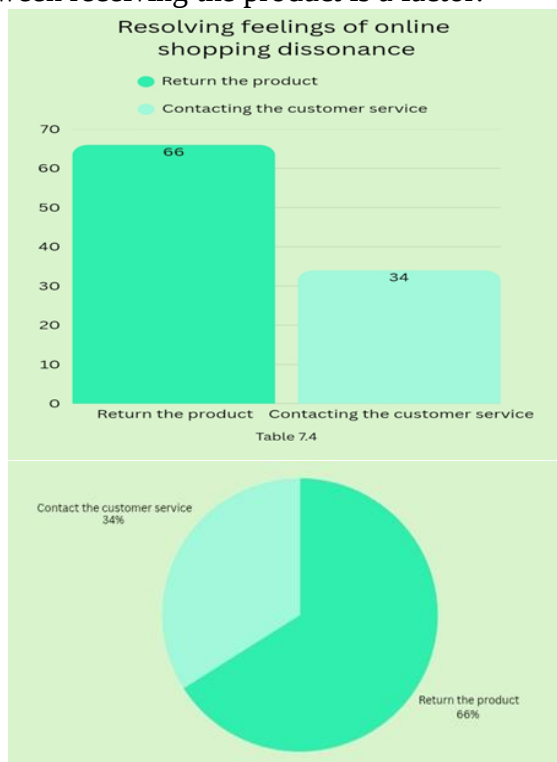


Figure 4 Analysis

The study reveals that the feelings of online shopping dissonance is delt by returning the product and by contacting the customer service center. In their contact nearly 34% showed preference to contact the informer service center while more of the respondents 66% agreed to return the product because of mismatch in expectations and experienced factor, which is gap in marketing of the online product.

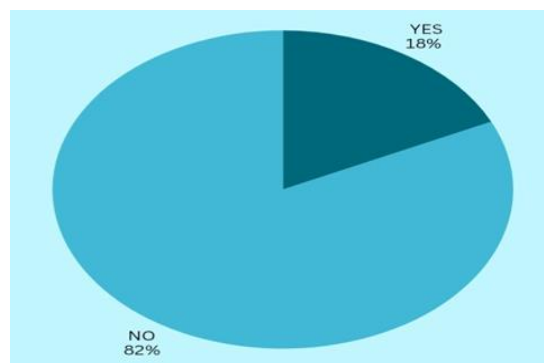
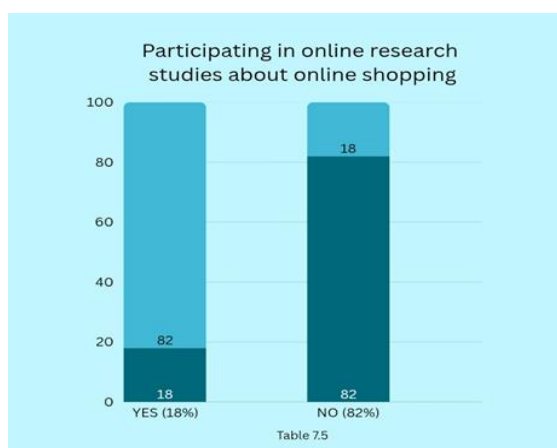


Figure 5 Analysis

When asked an opinion regarding participating involvement in online research studies, the majority of the respondents 82% opined that there is eagerness in filling online shopping forms and feedback. While only a minor part 18% show cased their disagreement to fill any online shopping survey forms or upload any feedback, since it's their personal perceptions which matter in the entire shopping experience.

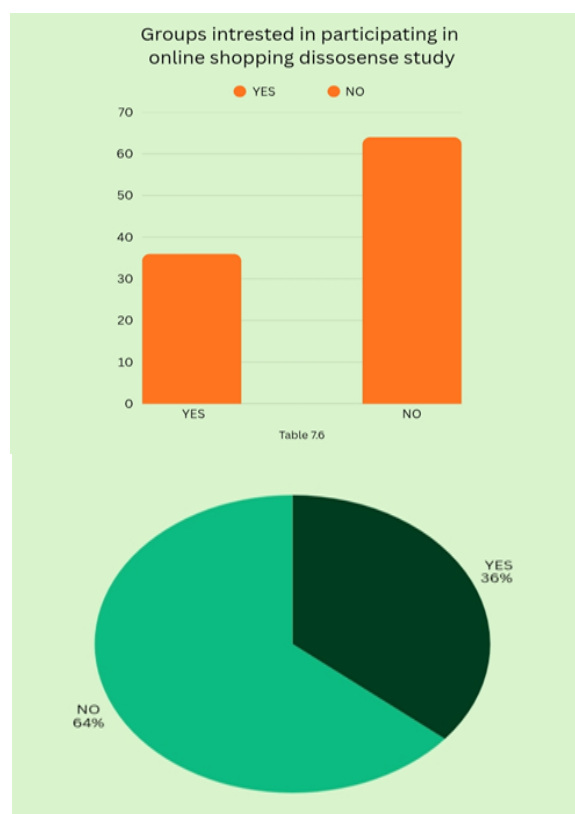


Figure 6 Analysis

The respondents have agreed to provide data on online shopping dissonance 36% showed positive yes, but 64% did not prefer to disclose their behavior as they are identified as emotions and impulse buyers.

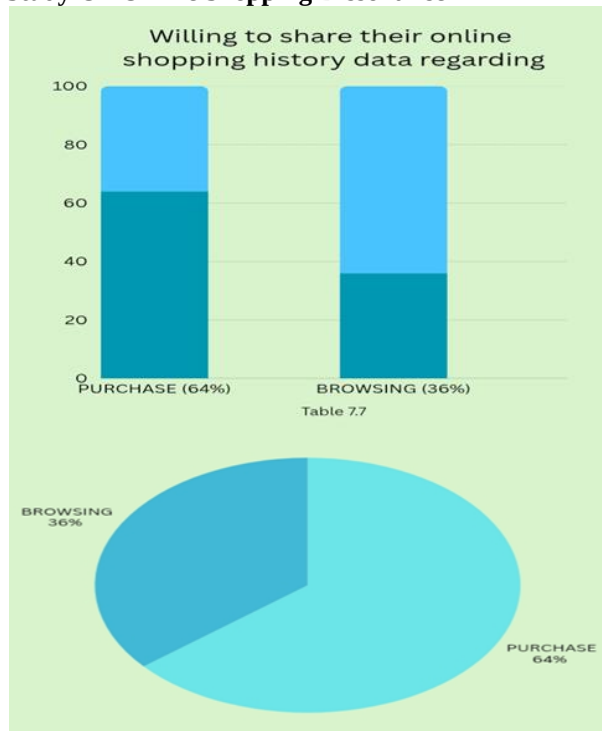


Figure 7 Analysis

The study group willingly provided data regarding purchase history and browsing time and history. 64% of the members retrieved purchasing history to evaluate purchase dissonance, while 36% were interested to evaluate browsing time and history.

Conclusion

- More of the respondents expressed feelings of dissonance after making a purchase. The majority of them are 56% opined that there is less dissonance on their attitudes and behaviors are mostly related with peer consumption behaviors and 44% of girls demonstrated their experience as no dissonance.
- While asking on times of experience of online shopping dissonance not so often was conveyed by 54% of girls and often felt dissonance by 46%.
- Similarly, factors consuming dissonance of online shopping was conducted and results revealed 18% dissonance in product-related information, 16% in pricing, 32% on quality, 34% on dissonance on delivery time has been revealed. It shows that the important factors like delivery on time and quality specifications mostly for indulging in online shopping behaviors.
- This is how the girls wanted to resolve their conflicting abilities was enabled by

Returning the product which amounted to 66% and contacting the customer service points by 34%.

- 82% of the respondents showed their views relating to participation in research studies relating to online shopping dissonance on no, and 18% of respondents actively involved in participating in research studies on the online dissonance. Mostly, 36% of the responses showed positive preference to particular in an online shopping dissonance feedback. 64% of girls are not interested in studies.
- The respondents shared the information regarding purchase history to evaluate dissonance as 64% while going through browsing history, where 36% of respondents.
- It is, therefore, evident that there is permanent change of behavior among young female students. Additional challenges are observed and always seeking out information that always supports behavior and beliefs.
- As young teenagers are risk and problem seekers, they are identified as active searches of conflicting beliefs and they want to reduce the conflicts in their attitudes and behaviors. They are always keen in making their purchases rational with judgment, thereby having positive experience. The factors mostly prominent that triggered dissatisfaction merely were relatively to quality, delivery time and price comparison which are mostly important determinants in making online purchases.

References

Research on online shopping dissonance, which is a form of post-purchase cognitive dissonance, is a growing field. It focuses on the psychological discomfort or regret consumers feel after making an online purchase. This feeling often arises from a mismatch between expectations and the actual product, a lack of "touch and feel" before the purchase, or the overwhelming number of choices available. Here are some articles and authors who have contributed to this area of research:

- [1]. "An Investigation of Post-Purchase Cognitive Dissonance and Its Determinants in Online Shopping". This article, often

cited in the field, investigates the factors that influence post-purchase dissonance in online shopping. Authors: Aydin and Yilmaz (2018) are mentioned in some sources as having explored this topic.

- [2]. "Unraveling The Impact Of Cognitive Dissonance On Online Shopping Behavior And Post-Purchase Behavior: A Study Among Young Consumers". This study specifically looks at how cognitive dissonance affects young consumers' online shopping and their subsequent behavior. Authors: Dr. R. Initha Rina, Dr. R. Preetha Leena, Ms. P.B. Saranya, and Ms. R. Sreeprabha.
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